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SUSTAINABLE FOREST DEVELOPMENT: A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Jean-Luc Bourdages
Science and Technology Division

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**SUSTAINABLE FOREST DEVELOPMENT:
A NATIONAL STRATEGY**

INTRODUCTION

In its major report⁽¹⁾ published in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development - often called the "Brundtland Commission" after its chair - stressed the importance of managing and developing natural resources, including forests, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development. In Canada, Parliament first incorporated the concept of sustainable development in legislation in December 1989, when it passed Bill C-29, creating the Department of Forestry. The *Department of Forestry Act* repeats the definition of sustainable development proposed by the Brundtland Report, and states that this principle must guide the orientation and activities of the Department.⁽²⁾ That same year, in a report on the role of the new Department of Forestry,⁽³⁾ the Sub-Committee on Forestry of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries in the House of Commons reiterated the pertinence of the concept of sustainable development in managing Canada's greatest natural resource, and underlined the need for Canada to adopt a new national forest strategy. The members of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) also adhered to the concept of sustainable development and decided

(1) World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.

(2) S.C. 1989, c.27, s. 2 and 6.

(3) House of Commons, Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries, Sub-Committee on Forestry (Bud Bird, Chairman), *Forests of Canada: The Federal Role*, Ottawa, November 1990, 187 p. On the issue of sustainable development, the Sub-Committee on Forestry felt that the Canadian forestry sector could constitute the best example of the implementation of this new principle in the area of natural resources.

to develop a national forest strategy that would serve as a framework for the implementation of this new management concept. On the international scale, the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, confirmed the importance and urgency of adopting a similar process to ensure the long-term health of forest ecosystems as being essential to the needs and well-being of present and future generations. Forests have played, and will continue to play, a fundamental role in the development and survival of the human species.⁽⁴⁾

At the National Forest Congress held in Ottawa on 2-4 March 1992, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers presented a new national forest strategy entitled *Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment*.⁽⁵⁾ On the same occasion, Council members and other members of the forest sector signed a *Canada Forest Accord* in which they pledged themselves to implementing the strategy and working actively toward the goal of the sustainable development of Canada's forests.

The new strategy and the Accord signed by members of the forest community are of great interest in that they indicate what sustainable development of Canadian forests can or must involve. The general principles and commitments listed therein are essentially drawn from the definition of the concept of sustainable development and the fundamental conditions generally associated with it.

In this text, we first present the context within which the national strategy and the Accord were developed; we then review the contents of each of the two documents, examining the objectives, orientations and commitments established by the various members of the Canadian forest community.

(4) Peter N. Nemetz, "Introduction," *Emerging Issues in Forest Policy*, Peter N. Nemetz (editor), Vancouver, UBC Press, 1992, p. 3.

(5) Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment*, National Forest Strategy, Hull, March 1992, 51 p.

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF FOREST MINISTERS

In 1985, the federal, provincial and territorial forestry ministers founded the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) in order to begin an ongoing process of consultation with Canadians concerned with forests. Through its dialogue with members of the forestry sector, the CCFM encourages the development of strategies, policies and programs aimed at the sustainable management and use of forests, while recognizing provincial responsibility for forest resource management.

The first initiatives of the CCFM, which included national forums on the workforce and employment, multiple use of the environment, forest management, trade and investment, led to the adoption in 1987 of the first *National Forest Sector Strategy*.⁽⁶⁾ Subsequently, the CCFM organized national forums on technological innovation, investment in the forest sector, sustainable development and forest management, and workforce training. During the forum on *Sustainable Development and Forest Management* held in Halifax in February 1990, participants determined that achieving sustainable development in the context of forest management requires us to identify our values, change our institutional structures and processes, and alter our attitudes and behaviour⁽⁷⁾.

In view of the interest shown in the concept of sustainable development, the increasing importance of environmental issues and the changing attitude of the public to the management of natural resources, the CCFM decided at its November 1990 annual meeting to develop a new national forest strategy. In so doing, the CCFM hoped to assume a leadership position and determine the overall orientation for forest stewardship in Canada.

(6) Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *A National Forest Sector Strategy*, Ottawa, 1987, 25 p. A document entitled *A Forest Sector Strategy for Canada* was published in 1981 by Environment Canada, formerly responsible for the Canadian Forest Service. Unlike the 1987 and 1992 strategies, the 1981 strategy was not comprehensive and was not necessarily the result of a concerted effort on the part of the members of the forest sector.

(7) Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *CCFM-Sponsored Forums*, fact sheet distributed at the National Forest Congress held in Ottawa, 2-4 March 1992.

THE NATIONAL FOREST STRATEGY

Three years after the adoption of the *National Forest Sector Strategy*, it became obvious to some members of the forest community that a new version was required that would incorporate the significant changes in policy and in the attitude of the population at the provincial, national and international levels. Developed under the auspices of the CCFM, the 1987 strategy reflected for the first time the views of several organizations and individuals in the forest community who were consulted. In its 34 recommendations, the new strategy addressed five major concerns of the time: forest management; trade and investment in the forest sector; employment; research, development and innovation; and public awareness.⁽⁸⁾ It also recommended the creation of a federal department entirely devoted to forests and the forest industry, and this recommendation was acted upon by the federal government at the end of 1989.

In order to develop a new national forest strategy, the CCFM considerably expanded its process of dialogue and consultation, which allowed it to collect the views of most organizations and individuals closely concerned with the management of Canadian forests. To this end, the Council established a National Forest Strategy Steering Committee, responsible for policy development. The committee was made up of representatives from government, industry and Aboriginal peoples, as well as members of the research and teaching communities, woodlot owners and environmental organizations. During the summer of 1991, the CCFM held five regional forums throughout the country, in Fredericton, Trois-Rivières, Toronto, Saskatoon and Prince George. Some 300 Canadians from a wide variety of backgrounds participated in these forums and another 80 persons submitted written commentaries. In December 1991, after 1,200 pages of commentary had been compiled, a first draft of the new strategy was examined at a national workshop in Winnipeg, and 700 citizens were given copies for their comments. A finalized version of the strategy, entitled *Sustainable Development: A Canadian Commitment*,

(8) CCFM (1987).

was presented to participants at the National Forest Congress at the beginning of March and the final version of the document was distributed.⁽⁹⁾

The new strategy is in the form of a series of strategic directions relating to the concept of sustainable forest development in Canada and to its implementation by the diverse elements within the sector. The strategy's goal is expressed in its title, *Sustainable Development: A Canadian Commitment*. More specifically, its goal is:

To maintain and enhance the long-term health of our forest ecosystems, for the benefit of all living things both nationally and globally, while providing environmental, economic, social and cultural opportunities for the benefit of present and future generations.⁽¹⁰⁾

The national strategy of 1992 specifies the idea of sustainable development applied to the forest sector. It stipulates that "the principle of sustainable development guides human activities so that they remain within the tolerance limits of the environment" and that its fate hinges on public participation in the decision-making process. This means that the public must be well informed and there must be innovative ways to incorporate society's changing views and values. Consequently,

Sustainable development in forestry expands the principle of sustained timber yield, [...] by including wildlife and fish habitats, watersheds and hydrological cycles, as well as gene pools and species diversity, to ensure that the use of the forest today does not damage prospects for its use by future generations.⁽¹¹⁾

The strategy sets out nine strategic directions covering all facets of the production, use and management of the Canadian forest. These directions, which are intended as a framework for achieving the vision of the forest expressed by the community in public consultations, are briefly reviewed in the following pages.

(9) Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *How the National Forest Strategy Was Developed*, fact sheet distributed during the National Forest Congress held in Ottawa, 2-4 March 1992.

(10) CCFM (1992), p. 7.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

A. Forest Stewardship: The Forest Environment⁽¹²⁾

As stewards of the forests of Canada, members of the forest community must manage forest ecosystems to maintain their integrity, productive capacity, resilience and biodiversity. While products of growth may be harvested and even enhanced through appropriate silviculture techniques, the forests' inherent biological limits must be recognized and their productive and renewal capacities must be respected. The true challenge is to manage forests as ecosystems, a goal that can only be attained through the integrated management of natural landscapes, ecological processes, wildlife species and human activities.

In order to achieve this goal, members of the forest community are committed to the following initiatives:

- an ecological classification of forest lands;
- the inclusion of measurable objectives for the state of the forest ecosystem in forest management plans;
- planning forest and silviculture activities according to an evaluation of existing environmental conditions;
- increased research on forest ecosystems and their response to human activities;
- defining and measuring the state of forest biodiversity and developing guidelines for forest management to protect genetic, species and habitat diversity, thereby maintaining biodiversity;
- the establishment of a network of protected areas representative of Canada's forests;
- the development of a working definition of old-growth forests and of forest management strategies to ensure the continuation of old growth.

B. Forest Stewardship: Forest Management Practices⁽¹³⁾

The new strategy recognizes that the use of forest land must take into account the ability of the forest to sustain various uses, the needs and rights of all users, and the benefits and

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 11 to 14.

(13) *Ibid.*, p. 15 to 22.

costs of each use. Sustainable forest management requires an integrated approach to planning and the use of forestry practices that respect the full range of forest values and maintain the integrity of the ecosystems. While acknowledging that clearcutting continues to be advantageous and acceptable in certain cases, the strategy recognizes that harvesting practices must be refined. As well, "[...] improved methods of encouraging natural regeneration may help to control costs and ensure that regenerated areas reflect the diversity of the ecosystems."⁽¹⁴⁾ Furthermore, good management practices for fire, insects and disease, which affect millions of hectares of forest each year, must be included in a more holistic, ecologically oriented approach to forest management that takes into account the full range of forest values.

The strategy provides for a large number of actions under this heading:

- broadening the scope of forest inventories, increasing the range of knowledge and assessing the impact of various management options to better determine forest land use;
- revision of harvesting practices and silviculture systems, taking into account the requirements of sustainable forest management;
- ensuring the prompt renewal of forests through harvesting plans and regeneration practices that respect the diversity of ecosystems;
- improved fire management capacities;
- the creation of forest conditions that are less vulnerable to insects, disease and competing vegetation, and a reduction in the use of chemicals by developing alternative methods and encouraging integrated pest management;
- the development of working models of sustainable forest management in the major forest regions of Canada and the establishment of codes of practices and professional conduct.

C. Public Participation: Expanding The Dialogue⁽¹⁵⁾

Since 90% of Canada's forests are publicly owned, it is up to public administrators to ensure that the population is involved in the development of objectives and

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 16.

(15) *Ibid.*, p. 23 to 25.

policies and the planning of forest management. Surveys have clearly shown the public's interest in forest management and its desire to be more closely involved in the decision-making process.⁽¹⁶⁾ For active public participation, the public must be well informed, with access to comprehensive and easy-to-understand information on forest resources, and forest resource managers must set up a process that is open, fair and clearly defined. In this area, the strategy's principal actions are:

- the use of public participation mechanisms in the various stages of forest planning, as well as in the review and revision of existing policies and agreements, in a perspective of sustainable forest development;
- an CCFM-prepared plan to upgrade the national database on forests, and the development by the federal government of a system of indicators on sustainable forest management;
- heightened public awareness and knowledge of Canadian forests and the numerous activities relating to them.

D. Economic Opportunities: A Changing Framework⁽¹⁷⁾

Forest industries are one of the largest economic sectors in Canada, and it is highly desirable for all Canadians that the major contribution made by forest activities to our economy be maintained. There are a number of challenges, particularly at a time when the forest industry is at a critical stage and is facing considerable restructuring in the pulp and paper sector. Canada's competitiveness in the forest sector⁽¹⁸⁾ depends, upon other things, on the development of advanced technology, access to markets, a favourable climate for investment,

(16) This was demonstrated in polls carried out in 1989 and 1991 for Forestry Canada: Environics Research Group Limited, *1989 National Survey of Canadian Public Opinion on Forestry Issues - Final Report*, prepared for Forestry Canada, Toronto, May 1989, 70 p. and appendices; and Forestry Canada, *The State of Canada's Forests 1991 - Environmental, Social and Economic Indicators*, Second Report to Parliament, Ottawa, 1992, 85 p., p. 40-43.

(17) CCFM (1992), p. 27 to 31.

(18) See, on this subject: *Forestry Canada, The State of Canada's Forests 1991 - Environmental, Social and Economic Indicators*, Second Report to Parliament, Ottawa, 1992, 85 p. Chapter Three, on forest industries in Canada, deals specifically with competitiveness at the world level. Forestry Canada has also made it one of its twelve performance indicators for the Canadian forest sector (indicator 7).

a reliable wood supply and the availability of a skilled workforce. To meet these challenges, the national forest strategy contains a number of actions aimed at:

- diversifying the forest industries and increasing the value derived from the forest, by developing and marketing higher value-added products;
- improving the quantity, quality and continuity of supply of forest products by expanding intensive silviculture and responding to the transition to second-growth forests;
- increasing the use of Canadian goods and services in world markets;
- ensuring that processes used in forest products manufacturing and resource management are environmentally acceptable, which means upgrading manufacturing facilities and developing environmental technology;
- improving the viability and stability of forest-based communities.

E. Forest Research: A Team Approach⁽¹⁹⁾

In the forest sector, research, both basic and applied, is essential to sustaining the benefits we derive from the forest. Canadian performance in this area is judged insufficient by a good number of analysts. For example, the percentage of total research and development spending in the forest sector (\$356.8 million in 1989) in relation to the total value of forest products delivered (\$50.4 billion in 1989) is 0.71%,⁽²⁰⁾ which is far inferior to the efforts made by our major competitors such as the United States and Sweden, whose percentages are more than 1%.⁽²¹⁾ For the improvement in research and development capacity that is necessary to achieve sustainable forest management, the strategy calls for:

(19) CCFM (1992), p. 33 to 35.

(20) According to data contained in Forestry Canada (1992), p. 71 and 75. As this excludes R & D spending carried out by some manufacturers of equipment not used exclusively in the forest sector, the ratio calculated by the federal Forestry Department is 0.6 per cent. On this subject, see also: O. Madore and J.-L. Bourdages, *The Canadian Forestry Sector: An Industrial and Technological Profile*, Background Paper BP-294F, Ottawa, Library of Parliament, Research Branch, April 1992, 27 p.

(21) Science Council of Canada, *The Canadian Forest-Products Sector*, Sectoral Technology Strategy Series, No. 9, Ottawa, 1992, 36 p.

- increased government and industry support for cooperative research institutions;
- increased investment in R & D, the expansion of networks and partnerships and accelerated technological transfers;
- a review of the composition and research priorities of research advisory bodies;
- increased involvement of R & D users and encouragement of the diversification of forest R & D.

F. The Workforce: The Demands Are Growing⁽²²⁾

Even though the workforce in the forest sector is highly skilled and experienced, rapid developments in the sector, particularly in technology, create new workforce requirements. To ensure that a diversified, highly skilled and competent workforce is maintained, the strategy proposes that the various elements:

- examine employment and training needs;
- revise training and development programs and develop new ones to meet the needs determined;
- provide opportunities for continuing education and skills upgrading;
- assess the feasibility of a certification system for silviculture and forest management workers.

G. Aboriginal People: A Unique Perspective⁽²³⁾

The Aboriginal people have deeply rooted ties with their environment and the forest. Development possibilities based on forest resources remain, however, insufficient for various reasons, one of which is the issue of land claims. In view of the important role of Aboriginal people in the planning and management of forest resources for traditional activities, the strategy foresees:

(22) CCFM (1992), p. 37-38.

(23) *Ibid.*, p. 39 to 42

- the development of a comprehensive Aboriginal forest strategy that empowers communities to manage their forest resources and develop their own models for sustainable forest management;
- the respect of constitutional provisions for Aboriginal rights in policies governing forest lands;
- increased forest-based economic opportunities for Aboriginal people through business development, training and the promotion of Aboriginal aspirations.

H. Private Forests: A Growing Opportunity⁽²⁴⁾

With only 9% of the national forest land, the roughly 425,000 private forest landowners in Canada produce 15% of the commercial timber harvest. Apart from the unquestionable environmental, social and cultural advantages they present, private forests offer considerable economic potential, and small-scale forestry is an ideal framework in which to develop sustainable forest management practices. There are many excellent examples of well-managed private forests that are models of sustainable forestry practices; however, current estimates indicate that less than 30% of private forest lands are managed in a relatively intensive fashion, as owners are faced with significant financial constraints. To help exploit the potential of these forests, the strategy proposes the following actions:

- the development of forest management programs that ensure a fair return for the owner;
- marketing a full range of forest products;
- expanding the skills and knowledge of private forest owners in forest management and improving the information available on private forests;
- a review of taxation systems and their impact on the management of private forests;
- increasing the reforestation of marginal agricultural land.

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 43 to 45.

I. Our Forests: The Global View⁽²⁵⁾

Since it has 10% of the earth's forests, Canada has a duty to ensure a wise stewardship of its forest resources and to continue to play an active part in international initiatives in sustainable forest development. For this reason, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, as well as during the long preparatory sessions preceding the conference, Canada was the principal promoter of an international convention on forests as being the only way to promote the worldwide conservation and sustainable development of forests. Because of the sustained resistance of countries of the South to this type of convention, participants in the Rio Conference had to settle for adopting less restrictive principles of forest management. However, the conventions on climate change and biodiversity that were signed in Rio will still have a positive impact on forest protection to the extent that forests are considered important carbon and genetic reservoirs.⁽²⁶⁾ Nevertheless, Canada hopes to continue to promote the adoption of an international forest convention. The strategy foresees a number of national and international initiatives with the aim of ensuring the durability of the world's forests. Principally, these are:

- Canada's commitment to conserve its forests, practise sustainable forest management, increase research and increase understanding of the contribution that forests make to the health of the global environment;
- Canada's commitment to maintain its partnership with other countries on forest issues and to promote the adoption of international conventions on climate changes, biodiversity and sustainable development of forests.

This concludes the summary of the commitments made by the various members of the Canadian forest community when they supported the new national forest strategy and its nine strategic directions. It is now up to each of the members to draw up individual action plans and begin the initiatives that will give concrete expression to the sustainable development of forests in Canada. As the trustee of this strategy, the CCFM will urge all members to take

(25) *Ibid.*, p. 47 to 50.

(26) Luc Gagnon, "Rio: la protection des forêts, un enjeu véritable," *Franc-Vert*, 9 (4), August 1992, p. 15.

action, ensure that progress is made and see that the strategy is adjusted where necessary to comply with changing needs and priorities.

During its annual meeting, held in Saskatoon on 13-15 October 1992, the CCFM reiterated its commitment to sustainable forest management⁽²⁷⁾ and adopted a plan for the implementation of the national forest strategy.⁽²⁸⁾ This plan includes the collective and individual commitments of CCFM members and foresees an annual progress evaluation, as well as an independent evaluation of activities at the half-way point and at the end of the five-year strategy. It also includes specific commitments for a national information system on forest biodiversity; an improvement plan for the national forest database;⁽²⁹⁾ a workshop on sustainable wood supplies; and a feasibility study of a certification system for forest and silviculture workers. The Strategy Implementation Task Force also recommended that the CCFM develop working definitions of biodiversity and a system of national indicators, and evaluate possibilities in wood supplies. To assist the CCFM in its work, the Task Force suggested the constitution of a National Forest Strategy Coalition (NFSC), which would be made up of the signers of the *Canada Forest Accord*. The Coalition would see to the production of a document relating to strategy implementation, principally in the form of an action plan model. The NFSC would also be responsible for the annual strategy review, would participate in the communications structure with the Committee of Canadian Forest Communicators, and would ensure coordination with related actions such as those arising from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The amount required to implement the Task Force proposal is estimated at \$1.1 million, which would basically be covered by the CCFM. This action would allow for the maintenance of a high level of consultation and coordination between the various members of the forest community, while increasing efficiency, cutting back on some costs, and increasing the credibility of all concerned.⁽³⁰⁾

- (27) Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *Forest Ministers Affirm Commitment to Sustainable Development*, Hull, press release, 15 October 1992, 1 p.
- (28) National Forest Strategy Implementation Task Force, CCFM, *Implementing the National Forest Strategy "Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment" from a Canadian Council of Forestry Ministers Perspective*, Hull, proposal, 1 October 1992, 12 p. and appendices.
- (29) On this, the CCFM has published: Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *Compendium of Canadian Forestry Statistics 1991*, National Forest Database, Ottawa, 1992, 86 p.
- (30) National Forest Strategy Implementation Task Force, CCFM, (1992), p. i-ii.

THE CANADA FOREST ACCORD

In its report tabled in the House of Commons in November 1990, *Forests of Canada: The Federal Role*, the Sub-Committee on Forestry of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries recommended that the new federal Department of Forestry, in cooperation with the provincial forestry departments, undertake a vast program of consultation with groups interested in Canadian forest management with a view to developing a national strategy for sustainable forest development. In order to reinforce the scope of such a strategy, the Sub-Committee on Forestry suggested that "terms and conditions for federal-provincial cooperation in the long-term strategy toward sustainable development be formally specified and confirmed in a working document, *The Canada Forests Accord*."⁽³¹⁾ In the months following the report, the federal government, in its comprehensive response,⁽³²⁾ considered the concept of a national accord to be an innovative proposal and mentioned that the development in 1992 of a new national forest strategy under the auspices of the CCFM was in line with the proposals of the Sub-Committee.

As a result, the National Forest Congress of March 1992 culminated in the signing of a *Canada Forest Accord*, not only by the federal, provincial and territorial departments belonging to the CCFM, but also by representatives from industry, labour, private ownership, Aboriginal people, university and professional communities and environmental groups. By their adhesion to this accord, the signers essentially endorsed the national forest strategy and its fundamental commitment to sustainable forests. Beyond the objective and their vision of Canadian forests, they formally promised to carry out a series of actions concerning:

- the conservation of the biological diversity of forests;
- the expansion of knowledge of forests;

(31) House of Commons, Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries (1990), Recommendation No. 18.

(32) Government of Canada, *Comprehensive Government Response to the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries Entitled "Canada's Forests: The Federal Role,"* Ottawa, September 1991, p. 15-16.

- the review of harvesting and silvicultural activities;
- the establishment of working models of sustainable forest management;
- informing and consulting with the public;
- supporting the competitive position of the Canadian forest sector;
- research and development;
- professional and technical education programs;
- Aboriginal and private forestry; and
- the conservation and wise use of forests worldwide.

These actions cover the strategic directions set forth in the national forest strategy.

CONCLUSION: REAL WILL OR WISHFUL THINKING

Some observers remain sceptical about the real willingness of the forest industry to adopt a new way of thinking about the Canadian forest and to modify its practices accordingly. These reservations are principally voiced by the environmentalists. Others, too, have been highly critical of the new national forest strategy. One of these is the engineer Lloyd R. McGinnis, president of the International Institute of Sustainable Development in Winnipeg. Speaking at the banquet of the National Forest Congress in Ottawa in March 1992, Mr. McGinnis first recognized that the strategy represented a remarkable and indispensable initiative in its expressed definitions, values and concepts. He insisted, however, that the strategy is still far too superficial in its orientations and concrete commitments, and that consequently, it will have a hard time leading to the sustainable development of forests in Canada. He estimated that the strategy does not truly render the essence of sustainable development, which is the real integration of economic, social and environmental aspects in a global perspective. He noted a lack of long-term vision in the economic members of the forest sector, who have problems in foreseeing structural changes linked to the globalization of markets and in adapting accordingly. He certainly does not see the strategy as going far enough in integrating the new concerns and realities represented by paper recycling, the rapid development of telecommunications and the

new "green consumers" and the repercussions of these on the demand, the production and the resource itself. He indicated that he would have liked the strategy to mention ways and means of co-managing forest resources with Aboriginal people and ensuring the active participation of the public in the decision-making process for forest resource management in Canada. Finally, he asked how we are going to face the international demand for wood from the 1.5 billion people who depend on it to cook their food.

Forest engineer Herb Hammond of British Columbia also spoke to the congress of his reservations concerning certain aspects of the strategy. He said he still notes a certain ambiguity in the desire to recognize the socio-environmental values of the forest while hoping to continue the pursuit of traditional economic objectives. For example, he said, he believes that the practice of clearcutting and treeplanting over vast areas is incompatible with the preservation of biological diversity. For him, it is imperative to achieve a holistic inventory of the forest that would allow for the integration of research on soil erosion and landscape ecology, the review of current policies and the adoption of minimum standards of protection for forest ecosystems. The ultimate challenge is to determine the minimum threshold for the objectives of protecting, maintaining and using forests.

For other observers, like Pierre Dubois, a journalist and forest engineer in Quebec, the new strategy is more akin to an international public relations campaign through which Canada is above all trying to enhance the image of Canadian forestry and forest industries on the international scene, where "the environment and trade have become communicating vessels."⁽³³⁾ He fears that the 1992 forest strategy will be better known in the embassies than among the Canadian population, and that "sustainable development" will not describe the reality of the Canadian forest, but will be a mere cosmetic term. According to him, the strategy promotes the status quo with respect to the issues on which environmentalists and the forest industry do not agree. He feels it does not go far enough in taking a clear position on clearcutting or on the use of chemical products to fight insects, disease and competing vegetation, and that it leaves a lot of room for interpretation.

(33) Pierre Dubois, "Stratégie canadienne des forêts - L'environnement devenu relations publiques," *Forêt Conservation*, May 1992, p. 29.

Whatever the case may be, we can scarcely deny the efforts of dialogue, consultation and discussion that have led to the development of the new national forest strategy and the signing of the *Canada Forest Accord*. At the very least, most interest groups in the forest sector have adopted a common orientation and seem prepared to make a concrete commitment to achieving the fundamental goal that sustainable forest development has become in Canada. Also, in a show of transparency and good faith, the CCFM will see that the achievements planned in the strategy are evaluated by an independent group at the half-way point of the five-year period envisaged for its implementation, at the end of which a new five-year strategy will be developed. Meanwhile, the 1992 strategy confirms that "Canada's forests are the heritage and responsibility of all Canadians. This document represents an accord among Canadians and a Canadian commitment to the goal of sustainable forests nationwide."⁽³⁴⁾

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(34) CCFM (1992), p. 51.

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